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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 06 ANKARA 003499

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM A/S BLOOMFIELD, EUR/SE AND EUR/RPM; OSD FOR  
DASD HOEHN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2014

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: GLOBAL FORCE POSTURE REVIEW: STATIONING OF F-16S  
IN TURKEY WILL REQUIRE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL APPROVAL

REF: A) ANKARA 3255 B) ANKARA 3005 C)03 ANKARA 7612

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman. Reasons: 1.5  
(B and D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (S) An inter-agency delegation led by State PM A/S Bloomfield consulted with MFA and TGS officials June 17 on the USG's latest thinking on the Global Defense Posture (GDP) review. A/S Bloomfield said the purpose of the visit was to continue the consultations that began last December, to provide details of specific proposals under consideration, and to solicit Turkey's views on whether proposals involving Turkey (i.e. stationing up to two F-16 squadrons in Turkey) were worth pursuing further. A/S Bloomfield and DASD HoeHN stressed in all of their meetings that no decisions had been made. TGS DCHOD GEN Basbug, while not outright dismissing the F-16 proposal, stated on numerous occasions that a decision to allow the US to station fighter aircraft in Turkey would be outside of the DECA, would be "100 percent political," and therefore would not "involve" TGS. U/S Ziyal was more negative, saying that such a decision would require the "very highest political decision, beyond the GOT and Parliament to include even the President, and would be subject to public opinion." Ziyal cautioned that if asked, Turkey would need to consider the request within the larger context of the US-Turkey relationship, making clear that Turkish disappointments over Iraq, the PKK and on the economic front (including QIZs) would factor into such a decision. Basbug and Ziyal pressed the delegation for specifics (i.e. number of aircraft, desired location, operational purpose, and scenarios under which they would be used). Ziyal offered to try to provide us a more developed judgment before the NATO Summit on how Turkey would respond to a request to station F-16s in Turkey. On separate matters, Basbug said that USAFE's proposed MOU on Weapons Training Deployments (which TGS earlier had rejected) remains open for discussion, and opined that EUCOM's request to establish a multi-directional cargo hub at Incirlik Air base (IAB) in support of OEF and OIF operations appeared "workable" at first glance (septels). End summary.

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GLOBAL DEFENSE POSTURE: SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS  
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2. (C) An inter-agency delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Lincoln Bloomfield consulted with senior Turkish officials June 17 on the USG's latest thinking on the Global Defense Posture (GDP) review. The delegation included Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy Andy HoeHN, EUCOM J5 Deputy Director RADM William Goodwin, OSD Commander Randy Hendrickson, and EUR/RPM's Nathaniel Heller. The delegation held meetings with Turkish General Staff (TGS) DCHOD GEN Basbug, MFA U/S Ziyal, and an MFA/TGS delegation led by MFA Deputy U/S Ilkin and TGS Chief of Strategy MG Arslan. Ambassador, DCM and other members of the Mission also attended the meetings.

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MESSAGE  
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3. (S) A/S Bloomfield opened the meetings with Basbug and Ziyal by saying the purpose of the visit was to follow up on the consultations led by State U/S Grossman last December (ref c) and to share our latest thinking on Global Defense Posture (GDP) review. Whereas the first round of consultations were broad in scope, A/S Bloomfield said the purpose of the second round was to discuss specific proposals under consideration within the US. He stressed that the delegation was not here to make any formal requests; no decisions had been taken. Before doing so, the Administration believed it was important for our Allies to share with us their thinking on the proposals under consideration. The GDP review process would be more successful if it takes into consideration the views and

concerns of our partners. It was important that our allies understand and support the need for militaries to move quickly and decisively to confront new challenges and threats, and that proper legal and political arrangements be in place to allow us to do so.

14. (S) DASD Hoehn said that Washington had consulted with EUCOM Commander GEN Jones since the first round of consultations. GEN Jones is considering options for relocating assets, including one that might involve Turkey: the possible relocating of two F-16 squadrons currently stationed in Germany. Hoehn noted there are three options under consideration: keeping the aircraft in Germany, returning them to the US, and moving them further south and east from Germany. On the latter option, Hoehn noted that one location under consideration is Turkey. There were a number of advantages to US-Turkey military relations from stationing the aircraft in Turkey, including increased opportunities for training and US/Turkey cooperation in future operations. Hoehn stressed that no decisions had been made. Before GEN Jones and others make a recommendation to the President, it would be useful for Turkish officials to share their judgments with us and advise whether stationing the aircraft in Turkey was an idea worth pursuing. Hoehn reminded Ziyal and Basbug of a point made during the December consultations on the importance of ensuring that flexible arrangements are in place to allow the US to use its assets in a decisive and timely manner. Bloomfield added that US respected the sovereign rights of its allies and was committed to operating within their legal boundaries. If there are political or legal constraints that would make it impossible for us to use our assets, it would be useful for us to know before we make a recommendation to the President. Similarly, if the issue should not be pursued further, it would be important for us to know.

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STATIONING OF F-16s A POLITICAL DECISION  
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15. (S) Basbug thanked the delegation for the briefing. He said it was important for him to understand fully US thinking on the GDP review, especially concerning the possible stationing of fighter aircraft in Turkey. Basbug confirmed that VCJCS GEN Pace had briefly mentioned during their meeting in Washington in March 2004 that the US was considering relocating F-16s and that Turkey was one option under consideration. GEN Jones reportedly also discussed with TGS CHOD GEN Ozkok his personal views on necessary changes in force structure that would be required to confront future challenges and threats.

16. (S) Basbug said he had a number of questions regarding stationing F-16s in Turkey:

--Is the US considering stationing the aircraft at Incirlik Air Base (IAB), or at other bases as well?

--Is the US considering stationing the aircraft on a temporary or permanent basis?

--Would the aircraft be used for training or for operations?

--If the aircraft are to be used for operations, what are the scenarios under which the US envisages using them?

--If they are to be used for training, would that training take place at IAB? Konya? Outside of Turkey?

17. (S) DASD Hoehn responded that the US was interested in training in Turkey -- whether or not F-16s are stationed here. But training could be a bridge to other areas of cooperation. The US was considering stationing the F-16s in Turkey on a permanent basis, and using the aircraft for both training and for operations. They could also be deployed from Turkey to other locations for training or operations, or conduct operations from Turkey. This could be within a NATO context or outside of a NATO context. Ambassador added it was difficult to say definitely in the abstract exactly how these assets might be used. If our training experiences are positive and it is possible to train out of Konya, the US might wish to station the assets at IAB and deploy them to Konya to train. If a NATO mission comes up, the US and Turkey may decide to work together. If a non-NATO mission were to come up, the US and Turkey could discuss how to proceed.

18. (S) Basbug said the use of IAB depends on the 1980 Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA). He opined that operational plans for IAB should be based on NATO operational plans. Turkey's support for reconstruction and humanitarian operations in Afghanistan and Iraq was different. This cooperation was in line with UNSCRs and a Council of Ministers decree -- not the DECA. Basbug said his understanding was that stationing F-16s in Turkey was outside of the DECA; a decision to allow the stationing of F-16s is "purely a political decision." Basbug said he was uncertain

how the US intended to proceed. If asked by the government, TGS will provide its advice, he said. He repeated that "this is a political decision. GFP is 100 percent political. If a request does not fall within the DECA, it does not involve us (TGS)."

19. (S) On next steps, the Ambassador said (and A/S Bloomfield and DASD Hoehn confirmed) that Administration officials would digest the information provided by allies during this second round of consultations and provide recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary would then review the

SIPDIS recommendations and then present a final set of recommendations to the President. If the Secretary were to recommend stationing the F-16s in Turkey and the President were to approve that recommendation, the USG would then submit a formal request to the Turkish government. When asked when this would happen, A/S Bloomfield said we were nearing the end of the consultation process and that final decisions could be taken within weeks or months.

10. (S) In a separate meeting later that day, Ziyal thanked the delegation for coming to Ankara and for sharing its thinking on the GDP review. He said the decision to consult in advance of presenting formal requests was "wise" and he appreciated the opportunity to provide his views. Ziyal said that in the absence of details, he could only offer an "initial gut reaction":

--US and Turkey have a harmony of views on the threats and challenges of the future, but not on how to confront them. We need to converge our interests.

--Any US request will be considered within the larger context of our overall relationship. Particularly, Turkey's disappointment over the USG's handling of recent developments in Iraq (and its cooperation with Turkey), combined with its failure to follow through on its commitment regarding the PKK, will factor into any decision. The U.S. didn't make good on what is now a surreal discussion of QIZ's. The US needs to consider this and clear the underbrush before the two sides can discuss any proposals.

--To the extent we know your thinking and you convey it to us in a transparent manner, we can consider your requests. But we need to know the details, your perceptions (number/types of assets, troops, purposes, operations, scenarios) before we can give you our perceptions.

--We have certain legal constraints.

--Some proposals might work; others may not. Training will be easier, but even then we need to look at possible impacts on civilian areas.

--If the US is asking whether it will get "blanket authority" to use IAB, this is not possible. This would have to go to Parliament, and Parliament will not approve this.

--The DECA is broken. Only one part of the DECA -- access to Turkish bases for the US military -- is functioning. (Comment: The implication is the economic aid, security assistance and defense cooperation elements are not working. End comment.)

11. (S) Ziyal suggested that the US tell Turkey exactly what it is considering proposing, including the details. Turkish officials could then review the information, and, if necessary, the two sides can sit down and discuss the matter further. While reiterating this was his initial "gut reaction," Ziyal said he personally did not see anything wrong with the US submitting a proposal.

12. (S) DASD Hoehn then offered to provide more specifics regarding the USG's thinking on possible changes in force posture in Europe, including those possibly involving Turkey. The US planned to relocate two heavy divisions from Germany to the US; keep many of the key HQ elements in place; move new capabilities like the Stryker Brigade forward; and expand training in Eastern Europe with new allies like Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. Two squadrons of F-16s might also be moved from Germany to either the US or to a location south and east of Germany. One option under consideration was Turkey. In addition to the F-16s, the US was interested in conducting Weapons Deployment Training (WTDs) in Turkey; exploring whether the US might be able to support the establishment of a training Center of Excellence at Konya; and additional training opportunities for NATO forces with the establishment of NATO's Air South in Izmir. When asked if the F-16s might go "east," Hoehn said that would depend on whether the dialogue in Turkey matures.

13. (S) After thanking Hoehn for the additional information, Ziyal said that request to station fighter aircraft in Turkey would require the "very highest level of political approval.

The government, parliament, even the president would have to approve this." Ziyal opined that the more NATO is involved, the better. MFA Deputy U/S Ilkin added that the less parliament is involved in any issues, the easier.

14. (S) Ziyal closed the meeting by agreeing to try to provide the US with a more informed view on the potential request concerning F-16s before GEN Jones discusses the issue with GEN Ozkok on the margins of the NATO Summit.

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LARGER MEETING  
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15. (S) Following the meeting with U/S Ziyal, A/S Bloomfield and others briefed a larger MFA/TGS delegation. Below is a summary of the questions raised by the MFA/TGS delegation and the responses provided by A/S Bloomfield and DASD Hoehn:

Q: Is there any relationship between training and deployment under the GDP review?

A: DASD Hoehn said USAFE would like to continue to train in Turkey -- whether or not we deploy aircraft to Turkey. It is important for our forces to train together in Turkey and elsewhere. If our forces do not train together, they likely will not perform well during operations. If the US were to station fighter aircraft in Turkey, the US would want to train here as well. Hoehn said it was important to address the challenges of deploying assets to training or operations environments, including the logistics element.

Q: If the F-16s are stationed at IAB, where would they train?

A: DASD Hoehn said they could train out of IAB, Konya and elsewhere (outside of Turkey).

Q: What if any is the relationship between stationing of aircraft at IAB, WTDs at Konya and plans for AFSOUTH at Izmir? Will AFSOUTH be dual hatted?

A: DASD Hoehn said that Air South would have some responsibility for defining the training needs of NATO forces. If all three elements (fighters at Incirlik, WTDs at Konya, Air South in Izmir) were in place, there would be possible benefits to training opportunities for the US, Turkey and NATO forces.

Q: What are the boundaries of "flexibility" that you keep referring to?

A: Based on the world's dynamic threat environment, A/S Bloomfield said the US does not want its flexibility limited by current rules. The GFP review is looking many years out. Not knowing the nature of the threats and challenges down the road, we need to ensure that we have the flexibility to respond in a timely and decisive manner. We need to know in advance if there will be any limitations on our posture and our ability to use our assets. One of the aims of these consultations is to identify any possible constraints that may exist. We need to work out arrangements that will allow the defense transformation to work and be successful. We need political and legal arrangements in place that reflect the solidarity among allies to use military force in a timely and decisive manner when necessary. Those possibilities that meet the political and military tests will be briefed and possibly recommended to the President. If restraints are too severe, it will drive us in a different direction.

Q: Are there any other assets (other than the two F-16 squadrons) that you are considering locating in Turkey?

A: DASD Hoehn replied that at this time there were none. However, it was impossible to know what challenges and threats will confront us 5-10 years down the road. He noted that five years ago, no one would have imagined that the NATO SYG would have listed Afghanistan as NATO's number one priority.

Q: Does the US envision using IAB as a cargo hub for future operations other than OEF or OIF?

A: A/S Bloomfield said that the US does not envisage, as part of GDP review, using IAB as a permanent cargo hub for our operations around the world. Our desire to use IAB in support of OIF and OEF operations is based on current operational requirements; in contrast, changes envisaged as part of GFP are long-term. (Comment: septel reports initial comments offered by TGS DCHOD GEN Basbug and MFA DDG for the Americas Ilıcak on EUCOM's request to use Incirlik as a temporary cargo hub in support of OEF and OIF operations. We intend to follow up with GOT officials to ensure they understand that we may approach Turkey with additional requests involving Incirlik, unrelated to the GFP, as operational requirements arise. End comment.)

Q: Do you plan to re-locate ground forces to other countries nearby?

A: DASD Hoehn said we are not envisaging new stationing of ground troops. However, the US will be looking for new training operations, pre-positioned equipment, but not permanent stationing.

Q: Are you looking to move fighter aircraft other than the two F-16 squadrons?

A: No.

Q: What are the priorities of the GDP?

A: DASD Hoehn said strengthening the harmony of views among allies of the challenges ahead; flexibility to confront new challenges, with allies themselves setting the parameters; lighter, more mobile forces; and pre-positioning of equipment.

Q: Are you looking to establish new legal arrangements?

A: A/S Bloomfield said that while we are not looking to establish new legal arrangements, we invite our allies to advise us if their existing arrangements are adequate to allow us to do what we are considering. It is important for us to hear whether our friends believe that existing political and legal arrangements allow them to meet their security needs. If Turkey were to advise us that new legal arrangements would be needed in the event we wished to station F-16s here, it would be an important input to have. Similarly, if Turkey were to tell us that the existing legal arrangements are satisfactory, it would also be important to know.

116. (u) A/S Bloomfield cleared this cable.  
EDELMAN